

PEO SOLDIER: TESTING IMPROVED PARACHUTE SYSTEMS

By Debi Dawson

Program Executive Office (PEO) Soldier is testing a new parachute system that the Army plans to use to replace the system in use since the 1950s. The new parachutes address increased weight requirements and provide additional safety benefits.

Beginning in 2008, all T-10 parachutes in the Army inventory for more than 50 years will be replaced with the Advanced Tactical Parachute System (ATPS) T-11. Although the T-10 is a proven system, today's paratroopers face increased requirements beyond the T-10's design.



Paratroopers are required to carry more equipment than in the 1950s, when the total weight of soldier, parachute system and combat load averaged 300 pounds. The T-11 is designed to carry a paratrooper with a total jump weight of 400 pounds safely to the ground. A key safety benefit of the T-11 is a significantly slower rate of descent averaging 18 feet per

second, resulting in a 25 percent reduction in impact force over the T-10. The T-11 achieves the slower descent by having a canopy with a 28 percent larger surface area than the T-10, while weighing only seven pounds more. Additionally, the main canopy design results in minimal oscillation after inflation and after lowering the combat load.

Operational testing of the T-11 began in January under the supervision of the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate and PEO Soldier. It is being tested by XVIII Airborne Corps paratroopers, riggers and jumpmasters who will make more than 3,200 test jumps from January to October to ensure its suitability for use in mass-tactical, static-line operations.

"It will ultimately result in more soldiers available for duty because of fewer injuries." - LTC John Lemondes

LTC John Lemondes, PEO Soldier's Product Manager for Clothing and Individual Equipment, explained that the T-11 Reserve Parachute is more reliable and much safer than the T-10's. "The T-11 harness improves paratrooper comfort and integration with the parachute and mission equipment," he said. "The T-11 main canopy design results in a much smoother deployment sequence, minimizes oscillation and significantly reduces the rate of descent, which will result in many fewer jumper-related injuries. It will ultimately result in more soldiers available for duty because of fewer injuries."

Under the current fielding plan, the 75th Ranger Regiment, the Rigger School and the Airborne School will receive the T-11 in 2008-09. The 82nd Airborne Division will receive the new parachute in 2009-11, and T-10s will be replaced Army-wide by 2014.

Headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Va., PEO Soldier designs, develops, procures, fields and sustains virtually everything the soldier wears or carries. By employing innovative concepts and technologies, PEO Soldier has made great strides in quickly placing improved equipment into the hands of soldiers, especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan. PEO Soldier headquarters is supported by three Project Managers (PMs). PM Soldier Warrior is responsible for Land Warrior, Air Warrior and Mounted Warrior. PM Soldier Weapons manages both individual and crew-served weapons. PM Soldier Equipment has purview over Sensors and Lasers, Soldier Survivability and Clothing and Individual Equipment. PM Soldier Equipment is the material developer and program manager for all of the U.S. Army's parachutes and auxiliary parachute equipment.

For more information on PEO Soldier, visit www.peosoldier.army.mil.



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